

Los Angeles, California  
June 16, 1966

Mr. Joseph P. Hehn  
615 North 7th Street  
Lebanon  
Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Hehn:

In answer to your questions about CHANDU I cannot be as helpful as I would like. But here goes:

Gayne Whitman did indeed originate the title role. In fact, the show was written for him to star in. It was sold, first, to the White King Soap Company of Los Angeles, for live broadcast. Then, because White King had no distribution of the Mississippi, transcriptions were made for Beech Nut, which used them in the eastern half of the country. The show had run some time when the transcriptions began. So we had to go back to the first and do the show over for them. A sidelight: We did five transcriptions at a time, working all night every Monday night, because I had to be at the office all day. (The actors could go home and sleep, but I had to show up and dictate an episode of the show on Tuesday morning. Those were the days for writers.)

CHANDU began in 1930. No one else wrote any of the scripts. And I directed it myself at first. I was also Story Editor. Incidentally, to answer your question about THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO, that was my connection there, - Story Editor. I can't remember when we got Cyril, but he has probably told you that. He took over the direction of CHANDU, THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO, and a big musical the agency had on its plate at the time, THE STORY OF OMAR KHAYYAM. Yep, I wrote that too, together with the lyrics for at least three numbers a week. We had all original music (written by Felix Mills) - what a life.

Besides Gayne, the principal roles, those of Chandu's sister, niece and nephew, were played by Margaret Macdonald, Betty Webb and Bob Bixby. All are still alive, but the two gals are married and I can't remember their names. I've been trying to think of someone who would know, and sooner or later no doubt I will. Bob has had a checkered life indeed. He was in Paris for several years, but I saw him when he came back, so, as far as I know, he's in this country. He changed his name to Bob Regent, his name in the show, and has been using it since except for a time in Las Vegas when he was called Rex Regent. I give you all this because you may be able to find him under one of these names. I have called the registry which handles calls for actors here, but Bob isn't listed with them.



Most disappoint<sup>ing</sup> of all is the answer to your need for scripts. I had thousands of them for years, carting them all over the country in filing cabinets. But eventually it began to seem ridiculous. So I threw them away. Tapes, of course, were non-existent in CHANDU days. And what happened to all those transcriptions, heaven only knows. White King never had any, as far as I know, because their program was live. If Beech Nut hasn't any, - well, alas.

There is one hope for scripts, however dim. The advertising agency for which I worked was called Earnshaw-Young, Inc. Long since folded up, and both partners dead. Harry Earnshaw, the president, had bound volumes made up, copyrighting them in his name without my knowledge. Whether I could have stopped him is a legal question never pursued by me. Anyway, those bound volumes may exist somewhere. Mr. Earnshaw had two sons, now, I believe, living in Honolulu. I've put in some calls, but so far have no address for them. I'll try a little later, and hope to include this address before the letter is mailed. If you do get in touch with them, use their information with extreme caution. Both were schoolboys when all this went on, and their data is not to be trusted, as Cyril knows. One hope might be that the scripts were stored here before the lads took off for the islands. In that case, I could perhaps get permission to examine them and choose two or three for your consideration.

This whole thing is complicated by the fact that in 1932 the TV rights were included by some smart lawyer for 20th Century Fox when the show was sold for pictures. At that time, TV was only a gleam in somebody's eye, but the clause was put in. Later, Sol Lesser bought the serial rights and made some serials. When I first came back here from New York, Sol had me out to discuss a TV series. He said he owned the TV rights. This the Earnshaw boys dispute, saying their father had told them he never meant to include the TV rights in the 20th Century deal. But I am the only one now alive who was there at the contract-signing, and I know that TV was never even mentioned verbally, never mind that it was in the contract. So there have been threats and rumors of lawsuits, and probably it will never come to anything. The Earnshaw boys are ready to defend their stand with their life blood, and I doubt whether Sol Lesser cares to spend money for a pilot, knowing he might face a lawsuit. (I think he could win, and have besought the Earnshaws not to hope my testimony would - or could - be on their side.)

The only reason for going into all this is to explain why the Earnshaws might not be willing to let us see scripts - they might fear a Sol Lesser devious scheme. Now, as to your question as to who owns the radio rights: probably one of the Earnshaw sons, or maybe both. This can easily be learned when I find the address.

Later. I have it. 1651 Ala Moana, Honolulu, Hawaii. The names are Fenton Earnshaw and Harry Earnshaw. Both names are given in the Honolulu directory. Fenton is the one who had all the dealings with Lesser, so perhaps his father left the rights, whatever they may be, to him.

I am sorry to be so non-forthcoming about the two women's whereabouts. If I can find a clue, I'll write again. Tom Collins later played CHANDU, and who the women were in that go-round, Cyril has no doubt told you. I'm sorry I don't know. Gayne, as you probably know, died a few years ago.



One final horrid thought. Have you considered how dated the scripts will inevitably be? In spite of the fact that the basic plot involved CHANDU'S brother-in-law who had invented what is now called a laser, so much of the action occurred in Egypt - long before Nasser - Burma, India, and so on - long before foreign aid and all the rest of it. It seems incredibly naive now. School children, once forbidden to listen because it was too exciting, would now laugh their little permissive heads off, I bet. Gad, I feel like Mrs. Abraham.

Anyway, good luck. And if I can tell you anything else, I'll be glad to do so.

Very truly yours,



Vera Oldham

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DATE OF DELIVERY  
IN THE POSTAL SERVICE

